

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 0601

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, UR

SUBJECT: FRG ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AT THE BEGINNING
OF 1975

AT FEBRUARY 4 POLADS, FRG REP (CITRON) CIRCULATED FOLLOWING
SPEAKING NOTES ON SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AT THE BEGINNING OF 1975.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY APPEARS AT PRESENT TO BE MARKING TIME.
THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP SEES ITSELF INCREASINGLY EXPOSED TO
CRITICAL OBSERVATION BY IDEOLOGISTS, MILITARY PEOPLE AND
SISTER PARTIES. IT SEEMS THAT THE BENEFITS AND DANGERS OF
DETENTE POLICY ARE BEING WEIGHED AGAINST EACH OTHER EVEN
MORE CAREFULLY.

2. EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE AT PRESENT NO INDICATIONS OF A
FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE ORIENTATION OF SOVIET FOREIGN
POLICY, IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT THAT IN CASE OF EXCESSIVE
STRAINS ON THE POLICY OF DETENTE, THE SOVIETS COULD IMAGINE
ALTERNATIVES. THIS IS BORNE OUT BY THE RECENTLY INCREASED
EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR UNITY WITHIN THE SOVIET BLOC AND
FOR CLOSING THE RANKS WITHIN THE COMMUNIST CAMP.
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3. BY WAY OF EXPLANATION OF THE FACT THAT SOVIET FOREIGN
POLICY IS AT PRESENT MARKING TIME, IT MAY BE USEFUL TO RECALL
ONCE AGAIN THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AND MOTIVES OF THE SOVIET
UNION IN THE FIELD OF DETENTE POLICY:

- PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN ORDER TO UNDERLINE THEIR WORLD POWER STATUS (MIDDLE EAST, CYPRUS);

- INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS A MODERN ECONOMIC POWER, HOPES FOR ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES;

- AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS AS THE MAIN PILLAR OF SOVIET DETENTE POLICY;

- COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS AS THE CORNERSTONE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION AND OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN GENERAL;

- BI-POLAR COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE REGIONAL INTERESTS;

- PROTECTION OF THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF INTENSIFIED EAST-WEST EXCHANGES.

4. THE REALIZATION OF SOME OF THESE OBJECTIVES HAS RECENTLY BEEN SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT FOR THE SOVIET UNION. THUS, MOSCOW FELT ITSELF INCREASINGLY EXCLUDED FROM THE PEACE DIPLOMACY IN CYPRUS (SOVIET CONFERENCE PROPOSAL) AND THE MIDDLE EAST. THE SOVIET UNION WAS OF THE OPINION THAT THE BASIS OF ITS DETENTE POLICY HAS BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION BY THE CONDITIONS PLACED BY THE US CONGRESS ON AMERICAN-SOVIET TRADE RELATIONS (HOPE FOR ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES BY TRADING WITH THE WEST, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SCREENING OFF SOVIET INTERNAL POLICY AGAINST NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF EAST-WEST TRADE). THE EFFECTS OF THESE REPERCUSSIONS ON MOSCOW'S FUTURE POLICY WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO CONFINE THE COOLING-OFF TO THE TRADE SECTOR AND NOT TO ALLOW IT TO AFFECT OTHER FIELDS AS WELL (SALT).

5. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INSECURITY
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CONCERNING THE POLITICAL STRATEGY TO BE ADOPTED VIS-A-VIS WESTERN EUROPE. COOPERATION WITH WESTERN AND BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENTS MEETS WITH IDEOLOGICAL OBJECTIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNIST CAMP ITSELF ESPECIALLY IN THOSE CASES WHERE LEFTIST FORCES IN THE WEST CONSIDER THAT THE TIME FOR CHANGES IN THE SOCIETY HAS COME. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOVIETS FEAR THAT A CRISIS IN THE WEST MIGHT BRING RIGHT-WING AND ANTI-SOVIET FORCES TO THE SURFACE. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED IF MOSCOW DECIDED PREMATURELY TO REPLACE COOPERATION WITH THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS BY COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN THE WEST - WHICH MAY BE ITS LONG-TERM INTENTION.

6. A SERIOUS CRISIS WHICH PUSHES THE WEST TO THE BRINK OF ECONOMIC COLLAPSE WOULD ENDANGER THE FRUITS OF DETENTE POLICY

FOR WHICH MOSCOW IS HOPING. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE IDEOLOGISTS IN MOSCOW REGARD CONTINUED ECONOMIC COOPERATION AS BEING IN THE INTEREST OF WESTERN INDUSTRY.

7. HOWEVER, THIS SOBERING-UP PROCESS AND THE SETBACKS MENTIONED HAVE NOT REACHED A STAGE WITHIN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WHICH WOULD SUGGEST THE CONCLUSION THAT THE POLICY OF DETENTE HAD NOT BEEN WORTH WHILE FOR THE SOVIET UNION OR THAT IT THREATENED TO ENTAIL MORE DISADVANTAGES THAN ADVANTAGES FOR SOVIET INTERESTS. FOR THIS REASON, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ASSUMPTION THAT MR. BREZHNEV'S ENEMIES CAN ATTACK HIM WITH THE ACCUSATION THAT HE HAD CONDUCTED AN UNSUCCESSFUL FOREIGN POLICY.

8. SUMMING UP, IT CAN BE SAID OF THE PRESENT STATUS OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY THAT THE FIRST PHASE OF BREAKING THE ICE WITH THE WEST HAS BEEN CONCLUDED WITH CLEARLY VISIBLE SUCCESS. IN ITS WESTERN POLICIES, THE SOVIET UNION IS NOW MOVING THROUGH ROUGHER WATERS WITH CHANGING WINDS, BUT IT APPEARS DETERMINED - UNLESS SOME UNCHARTED ROCKS APPEAR - TO CONTINUE ON ITS FORMER COURSE, ALTHOUGH POSSIBLY AT REDUCED SPEED.

END TEXT.BRUCE

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